

Friis, John

From: Michaela_Volovsek@whps.org
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2009 3:57 PM
To: Friis, John
Cc: Jaya.Vijayasekar@vernonct.org
Subject: World Language instruction

Dear Sir,

I am 24 year veteran teacher of French and Spanish. I have taught in Jordan, in England and here in CT, in small private schools and large public ones. While I am a native of CT, I have lived in various countries and traveled a good deal. This year, I am acting as secretary of COLT, CT's professional organization for language teachers.

As I imagine you have received emails from other concerned citizens, I hope to raise some points that perhaps have not been mentioned in other emails. Leaving aside the obvious point that tomorrow's adults need to speak other languages for business, diplomacy and other urgent pursuits, I want to share with you some information about how learning other languages makes us better thinkers, how it strengthens our minds. There are dozens of studies summarized at the following website: www.uwyo.edu/fled/documents/FLAnnotatedBibliography.pdf and the data presented include such things as how language learning can help to equalize performance between students of lower socio-economic backgrounds and their more fortunate peers, it cites evidence of an increase in IQ, and improved results on tests in other subjects, such as math. What's more, if I can include this quote from a website I'll provide the url to after the fragment, "...one researcher found that students who had taken a foreign language in high school had a significantly higher grade point average in all high school subjects....data from the Admission Testing Program of the College Board show a definite positive correlation between SAT scores and the study of foreign languages....each additional year of language study brought a further rise in scores. ...a number of studies in bilingual education also seem to lead to the conclusion that foreign language study can aid and even accelerate the cognitive development of the brain..." <http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-924/study.htm> These sites contain far more information than I can put into this email, and I don't wish to take up more of your time, but the sites do bear a few minutes' perusal, especially when we consider the kinds of challenges we face now and tomorrow's adults will be facing. It has never been clearer that we will need to work together, as a country and with other countries, if we are to solve the problems before us. Being to think well, and to communicate with a variety of others will be essential, and we must not deprive kids of these skills.

Thank you for your attention,
Michaela Volovsek